

SUMMARY OF SAVANNAH ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

GDOT Truck Lane Needs Identification Study – October 18, 2007 Coastal Georgia Center – Savannah, Georgia

The fifth Savannah Advisory Committee Meeting for the GDOT Truck Lane Needs Identification Study was held at the Coastal Georgia Center on October 18, 2007 beginning at approximately 10:10 AM. Michelle Caldwell, GDOT Project Manager, welcomed the group and thanked them for coming. She turned the floor over to Andrew Smith, Consultant Project Manager for HNTB. The following individuals attended the meeting:

Name	Company	Phone	E-Mail
Mark Wilkes	MPC		
Sean Brandon	City of Savannah	912-651-6420	
Susan Broker	City of Savannah	912-658-4378	sbroker@savannahga.gov
Nathan Mai-Lombardo	City of Garden City	912-963-2765	
Mike Weiner	City of Savannah	912-651-6600	
Teresa Scott	GDOT District	912-427-5788	teresa.scott@dot.state.ga.us
Brad Saxon	GDOT District 5	912-427-5715	
Matthew Fowler	GDOT Planning		matthew.fowler@dot.state.ga.us
Michelle Caldwell	GDOT Planning		michelle.caldwell@dot.state.ga.us
Radney Simpson	GDOT Planning	404-657-6689	
Kyle Mote	GDOT Planning	404-657-6016	
Tom McQueen	GDOT Planning		
Andrew Smith	HNTB		asmith@hntb.com
Claudia Bilotto	HNTB		cbilotto@hntb.com

Project Video/Introduction

Mr. Smith began by sharing the project video, including a 3-D animation of a truck lane, to help paint the picture of the expected freight increases in Georgia over the next 30 years. After the video, Mr. Smith began a presentation outlining the purpose, findings, and recommendations of the truck lanes study.

Segment Level Analysis

Mr. Smith reviewed the study's Phase I Recommendations and explained the evaluation criteria applied to each of the segments selected for further study. These include Safety and Security, Congestion and Mobility, Benefits and Costs, Economic Development Initiatives, Environmental, and Constructability. He shared findings related to Safety and Security as well as PM peak volumes and speeds in the truck lanes in 2035. Mr. Smith explained that the increases (equating to travel time savings) in some corridors are significant, though truck lanes are not a silver bullet for congestion in all areas. He continued with benefit-cost ratios, constructability ratings, and the environmental assessment. Each of these factors was considered in the identification of corridors for further analysis as a part of four truck only lane systems developed for the Atlanta region. He explained that despite scoring lower than some of the other selected segments, I-675 was included in a portion of the system analysis because it has a lot of available right of way and therefore offers some cost savings relevant for consideration in the analysis.

System Analysis

Mr. Smith presented the four system alternatives and described the logical termini and access points identified for each. He then presented the system analysis results, including corridor volumes, speeds, and benefit-cost ratios. The truck lanes attract demand from other arterials in the corridor and that the lanes accomplish a lot by doing this and keeping up speeds. He continued that there are two ways of looking at the B/C ratios. You can look at the system with highest benefit-cost ratio where you are getting the most for your money, or the system that costs most but also brings the most benefit. System 1 has the highest B/C ratio, but System 3 has the highest system benefit even though its costs are also the highest. Mr. Smith continued with the summary of environmental findings and final system rankings. He then provided a general summary of observations regarding truck lanes and the preliminary study recommendations, which include the construction of truck only lanes on I-75 North, I-85 North, I-75 South, I-20 West, and I-285 in Metro Atlanta. The first phase includes the construction of truck only lanes on I-75 North, I-285 West, and I-75 South.

Mark Wilkes, Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC), asked if the analysis looked at the operations of system to system interchanges. Mr. Smith responded that this was a link-based analysis; specific delay at interchanges is not included.

Savannah Sub-Area

Claudia Bilotto, HNTB provided an overview of the Savannah Sub-Area analysis conducted as part of the truck lanes effort. She explained that explosive growth projections at the Port of Savannah, as well as growth in warehouse/distribution space and increased commuter traffic have all contributed to the need for improvements that address truck-related traffic in the area. Ms. Bilotto outlined the importance of coordinating with other ongoing efforts in the area and provided an overview of the proposed port connector road project that is undergoing further consideration by GDOT and the Georgia Ports Authority. Additionally, operational improvements that address truck specific movements in the area will be included in the final recommendations of the study.

Mr. Wilkes asked if the Port Connector Road was evaluated as truck only? Ms. Bilotto responded that it was but that the facility had more utility when open to mixed traffic. He asked if operations at the I-95/SR 21 interchange were considered as well as the tie in to Effingham Parkway. Ms. Bilotto responded that the Chatham County Interstate Needs Analysis and Prioritization Plan was looking at the interchanges specifically. Radney Simpson, GDOT Project Manager on the Chatham County Study, added that recommendations from the study should be available later this year.

Conclusions/Next Steps

Mr. Smith then concluded the presentation with a summary of emerging issues related to truck lane opportunities. He explained that truck only lanes make sense, but they also must compete with many other improvements for limited funding.

The meeting concluded at approximately 11:45AM.